

Sermon Outline

THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

THE KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST (REVELATION 11:15)

Previous Lessons: (1) The Savior of the World (Jn 4:42); (2) Our Place in the Son (Col 1:15-17); (3) Those of the Divine Image (Gen 1:26-28); (4) Hope for the Nations (Gen 12:1-3); (5) Priestly Kingdom (Ex 19:1-6); (6) The Throne of Forever (2 Sam 7:12-16); (7) The Branch of Jesse (Isa 11:1-5); (8) Repent and Be Baptized (Acts 2:29-38); (9) The Grace Defense of His Holiness (1 Peter 3:14-15); (10) The Kingdom of Our Lord and of His Christ (Rev 11:15)

I. The Holy Ever After

II. Trumpets of Judgment

- A. To understand on our passage, let's try to understand its context.
- B. The book of Revelation...
 - 1. ...speaks about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the events surrounding that return (Rev 1:1; 22:7).
 - 2. ...was given by God to encourage us to remain loyal to our Lord Jesus Christ, even as the world around us grows more and more evil by the day (Rev 22:12).
- C. Revelation 8 to 11 shows seven judgments that God would bring upon the world.
 - 1. Each judgment is announced by the blast of an angelic trumpet.
 - 2. Think of these judgments as God's artillery bombardment upon the world, forcing the world toward repentance before the end actually comes.
- D. In Revelation 8, which is where the series of judgments begins, John sees seven angels, each holding a trumpet.
- E. As each angel blows his trumpet, God brings a specific punishment upon the world.
 - 1. The *first* trumpet brings hail and fire upon the earth (8:7).
 - 2. The *second* trumpet kills a third of the creatures of the sea (8:9).
 - 3. The *third* trumpet sends a great star falling from heaven, causing a third of the waters to become bitter (8:10).
 - 4. The *fourth* trumpet strikes the heavenly bodies, preventing them from giving off their light (8:12).
 - 5. The *fifth* trumpet frees demonic powers of the "bottomless pit" (9:1-11).
 - 6. The *sixth* trumpet releases four destroyer angels who are bound at the river Euphrates in Iraq (9:14, 15).

- F. Why is God allowing all of these things to happen?
1. God is waging war on the kingdoms of sinful man, wearing down the confidence of sinful man.
 2. God is answering the prayers of all his children for justice and deliverance from their oppressors.
 3. God is pressuring rebellious men and women toward repentance.
- G. But God reveals that even this sixth judgment does not turn mankind to repentance. 1. Revelation 9:20-21 says,

The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshipping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, ²¹ nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

2. Even at the eleventh hour, the human race wants its own way.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What does the book of Revelation teach us? (2) What are we seeing in Revelation 8-11? (3) What judgment does each angel bring? (4) Why is God allowing these things to happen? (5) What does Revelation 9:20-21 teach about man's response to the judgments?

III. The Seventh Angel

- A. In Revelation 11, we come to the angel with the seventh trumpet.
- B. Seven is the number of completion and perfection.
1. God made the world in six days, and rested on the seventh (Gen 2:2, 3).
 2. The number seven is a symbol of completion.
 3. The appearance of the seventh trumpet is a sign that things are coming to a close very soon.
- C. But before the seventh angel blows his trumpet, there is a pause in the judgments (10:1-11:4).
1. During this pause, God sends two witnesses to speak for him to the world.
 2. These two witnesses are likely symbols of the Church as it seeks to faithfully bring the Gospel to the world before it is too late.
 3. According to 11:3, these witnesses will prophesy for 1, 260 days, which is a number that symbolizes this period of persecution (V. Poythress, *The Returning King*, 128).
 4. The pause between the sixth and the seventh trumpets is to give mankind one last opportunity to repent.
- D. When the seventh angel lifts the trumpet to his lips, heaven declares victory! —“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What is the significance of the number seven? (2) Why is there a pause between the sixth and seventh judgments? (3) What does God do during the pause between the judgments? (4) What happens when the seventh angel finally sounds his trumpet?

IV. The Kingdom of the World

- A. The kingdom of the world (*hē basileia tou kosmou*) refers to the whole realm of mankind in general (Rev 13:8).
- B. The kingdom of the world comprises all the nations of the earth and their component communities:
 - Families
 - Clans
 - Tribes
- C. The kingdom of the world also encompasses all the various realms of power and giftedness in human society.
 - Education
 - Sciences
 - Humanities
 - Commerce and finance
 - Transportation
- D. The kingdom of the world is also the world of the natural biosphere; plants and animals.
- E. Why is God judging the world?
 1. Up this point, the world has been in the power of the devil.
 2. Ever since the first rulers of the world, Adam and Eve, rebelled against God, Satan has held the world under his control.
—First John 5:19: “We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”
 3. Under the prince of the air, the world became a source of temptation for mankind, a source of idols.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What is included in the kingdom of the world? (2) “Ever since the first rulers of the world rebelled against God, Satan has held the world under his control.” Discuss.

V. The Transformation of the Kingdom of the World

- A. But at the blast of the seventh trumpet, the long awaited liberation of the world is completed.
—The kingdom of the world—the world of families, concert halls, and hawker centers—finally *becomes* the kingdom of God and Christ.
- B. This word “become” (*egeneto*) implies transition and transformation—not destruction and annihilation (!!)
- C. The fact that God does not destroy the world but transforms it tells us something important.

1. God does not hate his creation, nor does he necessarily hate the products his creation can produce.
 2. What God hates is the sin and the evil powers that hold his creation hostage to evil.
 3. God is against the enemy who hijacked his universe, and forced it to produce all kinds of wicked things.
 4. Since it is sin that is the problem, God does not seek to destroy the world but to save it.
- D. Of course, the process of change/transformation itself would imply some degree of destruction.
1. When someone decides to develop a plot of land that is already built up, he must first tear down existing structures that are in the way.
 2. Similarly, God must remove all the evil obstacles that obstruct the emergence of the new (or renewed) creation.
—Second Peter 3:10: “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.”
—Revelation 21:1: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...”
 3. Whatever destruction attends the transformation of the world into the Kingdom of God must be understood in terms of *purification* (i.e. “creative” destruction)
- E. The bottom-line is this: Salvation is the purification and restoration of the world, not its wholesale destruction.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What happens when the seventh trumpet is blasted? (2) What is the significance of the word “become”? What does it imply? (3) Some destruction is still involved in the transformation process. But how are we to understand this sort of “creative” destruction?

VI. At Long Last...Theocracy!

- A. But what exactly is the world being restored and transformed into?
—*The world is being transformed into the great theocracy—the kingdom of God and of his Christ.*
- B. As the divine King who created the universe and defined the world into being, God has every right to install himself as King over all.
1. God is the heart of all life.
 2. God is the fount of all existence.
 3. God is the noble sun around whom all his people live and serve.
 4. God is the Center, the Foundation who gives everything its meaning and purpose.
- C. Standing next to God is his *Christ*, his Anointed One, the Lord Jesus.
1. Jesus’ rightful place is always at the Father’s side because Jesus is *the Son of God*.

- a. He is of the same substance and nature as God the Father.
 - b. He is equal to God the Father.
- 2. Jesus' rightful place is always at the Father's side because Jesus is *the Second Adam*.
 - a. Jesus is the perfect human being.
 - b. Therefore, Jesus rules at God's side as God's Prime Minister, God's lieutenant, God's Servant King.
 - c. Jesus is the one human being who has given himself to God in total and absolute devotion—and God has rewarded him with absolute authority over the whole world.
- D. The fact that Jesus rules at God's side—the fact that the kingdom is the kingdom of God *and* of Christ—tells us that God had always intended for his kingdom to be administered by a human being.
 - 1. This explains why God's kingdom cannot arrive apart from man, his appointed representative in the world.
 - 2. Unless mankind says Yes to God, God's kingdom cannot be realized in the world.
 - 3. Now that there is a man to give God complete allegiance, God's kingdom can finally take root on the soil of human culture.
 - 4. God's kingdom can finally be realized in the world.
 - 5. The kingdom of man can finally become the kingdom of God.
- E. All of the above should give us a deeper appreciation for our Lord Jesus Christ and all that happened to him.
 - 1. Jesus is where God's kingdom first takes root in the human race.
 - 2. By his perfect obedience to God, his atoning death, his resurrection, Jesus becomes the point of contact between God and the world.—Jesus is where God embraces the world completely.
 - 3. Through Jesus, God's Kingdom expands to embrace men and women from every race, and every language, and every nation.
 - 4. For this reason, the Kingdom of God is also the Kingdom of Christ.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What is the world transformed into? (2) Why does God have the right to install himself as King over the world? (3) Why does Christ reign next to God? (4) “The fact that Jesus rules at God's side—the fact that the kingdom is the kingdom of God *and* of Christ—tells us that God had always intended for his kingdom to be administered by a human being.” Discuss.

VII. Atheism Dehumanizes, Theocracy Humanizes

- A. People are ruled by the stories they believe.
- B. *Which is the true story of the world? Which is the true story that corresponds to the reality God has prepared for his children?*
- C. The story that many people believe today is the story of atheism and secular humanism.
 - 1. It is the story that...
 - there is no God (or that God is irrelevant);

- that good and evil are ultimately decided by man;
 - that man needs to be free to determine his own values, his own destiny;
 - that belief in God stifles man’s creative impulse.
- D. But if we followed the story of secular humanism to its logical conclusion, where would that lead us?
1. We will realize...
 - that no human being has any real value in him- or herself,
 - that whatever value we think we have is simply a figment of our imaginations.
 2. You can see what this would lead to.
 - a. In time, those in power—those who make the laws, those with guns, money, and education—will decide what value the rest of us should have.
 - b. I don’t need to spell out for you how dangerous that will be!
- E. But thankfully, it is secular humanism that is the myth.
1. Jesus has risen from dead and ascended into heaven.
 - a. The existence of the Church is itself evidence of this.
 - b. Second Peter 1:16: “For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”
 2. Therefore, Revelation 11—the end revealed by Jesus—is the true end of the story.
 - a. History has been God’s story all along.
 - b. As Creator, only God can glorify man.
 - c. When we belong to God, far from reducing us to dust, God raises us to eat with him and sit with him in glory.
 - d. In God and Christ, we get our humanity back.
—We are the priestly and royal children of God.
It means we become human again, and not just lab rats in a social experiment, or tools in an economic machine.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) “People are ruled by the stories they believe.” What does this mean? Discuss. (2) What is the story of atheism and secular humanism? (3) What is the logical conclusion to the story of atheism and secular humanism? (4) Why is secular humanism the myth, not Christianity? (5) If Revelation 11 is the true end to the story, what does this say about man’s real value? (6) “In God and Christ, we get our humanity back.” Discuss

VIII. God’s Kingdom Challenges Deified Money

- A. The fact that history will end with the Kingdom of God and Christ also challenges some of the values that we have gained along the way in life.
- B. One of the great elements of the world that has been raised to god-like status is *money*.

1. This is to be expected since money is the ability to acquire goods, shape lifestyles, and therefore influence others' opinions of us.
 2. Because money is such a necessary part of life, we tend to think more highly of money than it can actually deliver.
 3. We trust money to sustain our happiness indefinitely.
 4. So we orient our lives around the pursuit of money—and in time, we even begin valuing people in monetary terms.
 5. Money moves from servant status to godlike status.
—Money becomes the end for which we live.
- C. Well, how then does Revelation 11:15 reform our perspectives?
1. If the ultimate end of all things is God and Christ, then obviously, money cannot be the end.
 2. Money cannot...
 - buy us ultimate happiness.
 - give us world peace.
 - bring about the resurrection.
 3. These things come to us freely by God's grace.
 4. Our good and generous Father shares these new treasures with both rich and the poor.
 5. Do not overestimate what money can do.
 6. Those of us who have our careers more or less established need to guard our hearts from the overestimation of money.
—We will never have “enough” money.
 7. If parents worship money, don't be surprised that your kids will too as well.
 - a. Make sure that God is the living reality in your hearts.
 - b. In so doing, you will protect your children from making money their chief end in life.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Why is the worship of money such a temptation for people? What is it about money that makes it an easy idol to worship? (2) How does Revelation 11:15 reform our perspective on money? How does it put money in perspective?

IX. God's Kingdom Challenges the Autonomous Self

- A. The fact that history will end with the Kingdom of God and Christ also challenges another value that we hold—the rule of the autonomous, God-less Self.
- B. The autonomous, God-less Self—what Scripture calls “the flesh”—is one of the major sources of suffering, and one of the greatest challenges opposing the Kingdom of God.
- C. God created each of us as self-conscious individuals, with desires, ambitions, passions, and the capacity to choose our own paths to happiness.
—There is nothing wrong with individuality or individualism.
- D. Where things go wrong is in the *estimation* of our own individual selves.

1. When someone places so much value on his or her own desires that he or she become the center of his or her own universe—his or her own god-like beings—then we have a problem!
 2. Such a person ceases to be a full human being, and simply becomes “flesh.”
 - a. First Corinthians 3:3: “for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?”
 - b. Galatians 5:17: “For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do”
- E. But if the end of all things is the Kingdom of God and Christ, then the fleshly way of life is not the answer.
1. The Self must be placed under the Lord God and his Christ.
 2. Just as Jesus subordinated himself to God, we subordinate ourselves to Jesus and to God.
 3. The center of the universe, the controlling desire of the heavens, is not me, myself, and I—it is the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 4. We are most fully (and beautifully) human when we seek God, not when we live for ourselves.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What is the “autonomous, God-less Self”? What is the term Scripture uses for it? (2) Is the flesh equivalent merely to “individuality” or “individualism”? (3) When does an individual become merely “the flesh”? (4) If the goal of all existence is the Kingdom of God, how must we esteem our own desires? How should we reorient our ambitions?

X. God’s Kingdom Comes from God

- A. Those are some of the ways we live in light of the Kingdom today.
1. We refuse to trust in money for personal salvation.
 2. We refuse to worship ourselves.
 3. Instead, we honor God and Christ as holy in our hearts—and we are ready to explain to the world why we do this (1 Pet 3:14, 15).
- B. But we ourselves are not the ones who bring the Kingdom into its fullest expression.
1. Through evangelism, we to teach the world about the coming Kingdom.
 2. Through good works, we seek to influence our societies with the values of the Kingdom.
- C. In the end, the Kingdom is itself a gift from God through Christ our Savior.
1. By his blood, Jesus forms the community of the Kingdom (Rev 5:9, 10).

2. By his sovereign will, Jesus imposes the Kingdom upon the world (Rev 19:11-15).

***Questions for reflection:** Who will bring the fullness of the Kingdom? Will the Church bring the full manifestation of God's Kingdom into the whole world?

XI. Preparing for His Return

Jesus Christ our Lord is the Savior of the world. It is he who will complete the salvation of the world by fully extending the rule of God. We trust in our Savior to that end; not just for our personal salvation, but for the final salvation of the whole world. In the mean time, we wait. Yet, our waiting is not passive. We call people to faith and repentance. We give a gentle defense of our faith. We form and nurture Christian communities wherever God calls us. In doing all these good works, we prepare the world for the return of the King. May God grant us endurance and faithfulness for the glory of his Name.